



# 2007 Census of Agriculture

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## History of the Census of Agriculture, Number of Farms, and Land in Farms

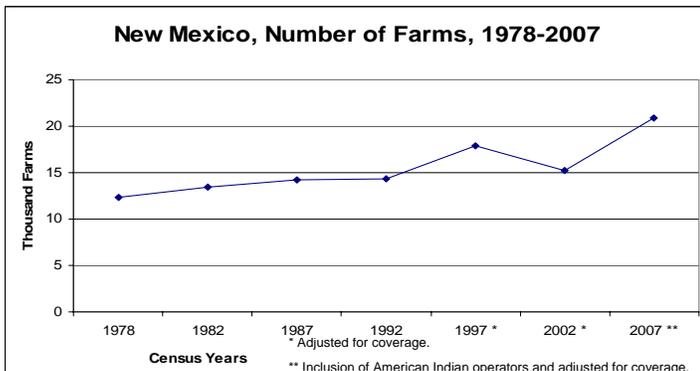
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**History:** The 2007 Census of Agriculture presents a snapshot of the current economic health, industry structure, and operator demographics for America’s farms and ranches. The Census of Agriculture began in 1850 and was conducted by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, through the 1992 Census. Responsibility for the Census of Agriculture was transferred to USDA in 1997.

Historically, Native American populations were not included in the censuses. The American Indian populations and farms were represented by an estimate of the households and farms from the tribal leaders and federal government agencies servicing the tribes. The production agriculture data was included in the crop and livestock tables, but each tribe was represented as a single farm in the demographic data. The estimated number of farm operators on the reservations was in a special table in the Appendix.

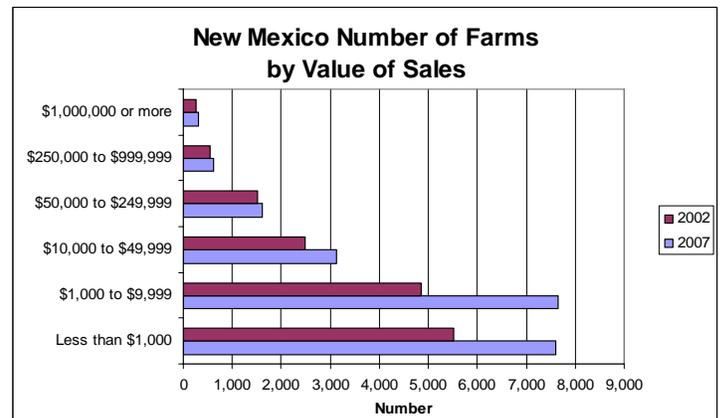
The Bureau of the Census included Native Americans in the 2000 Population Census, by individual household, for the first time. For the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the American Indian farm operators reported individually for the first time. Some of the changes from the 2002 Census reflect this change in procedures.

**Number of Farms:** The number of farms and ranches in New Mexico has trended upward over the last 30 years. This is a reflection of Americans’ choice to live in rural areas and the “country lifestyle.” The following chart shows these changes.



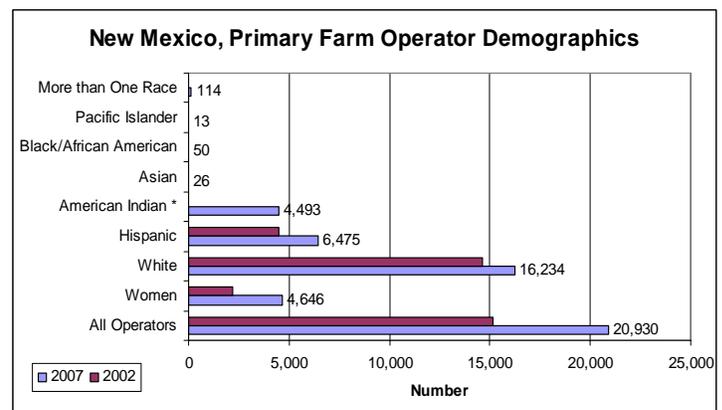
With the 1997 Census, NASS began adjusting the data for coverage, in addition to the non-response adjustment utilized historically. This provided data users a more complete picture of the industry and rural America. A farm is defined as any agricultural operation that generates \$1,000 in sales

or has the potential to generate \$1,000 in sales. The 2007 Census counted 20,930 farms, an increase of 5,760 farms from 2002. The change reflects the inclusion of agricultural operators on American Indian reservations for the first time in history and the outreach efforts to all minority operators, which were believed to be undercounted.



The chart above presents a comparison, between 2002 and 2007, of the number of farms by sales category. The two categories with the largest number of farms are in the smallest sales categories, reflecting the lifestyle, retirement, and cultural aspects of these operations. Many of the American Indian operators met the definition of these small sales categories.

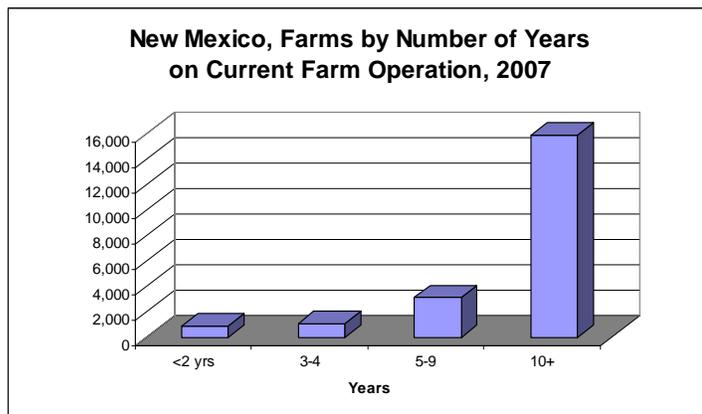
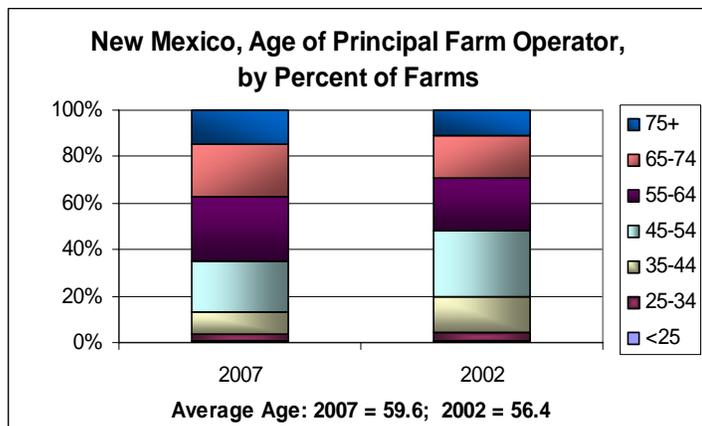
A quick look at the demographics of the primary operators of the farms and ranches shows the large increases in American Indian and Hispanic operators. The number of women operators more than doubled from 2002, reflecting the American Indian cultures.



NASS had a stronger outreach program for all minority groups for the 2007 Census. In New Mexico, this effort is reflected most obviously by the increase in Hispanic operators.

American farm and ranch operators continue to age as can be seen in the following chart and table. The operators' average age increased by 3.2 years during the five year period to 59.6 years.

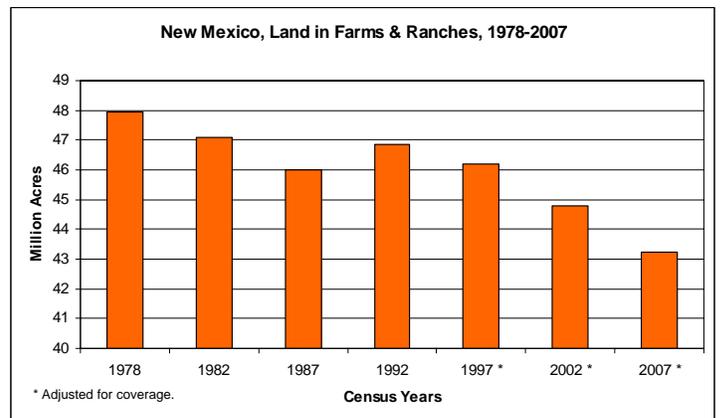
Census	Age Group							Average Age
	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	
2007	131	687	1,937	4,652	5,779	4,691	3,053	59.6
% of Farms	0.6	3.3	9.3	22.2	27.6	22.4	14.6	
2002	124	577	2,308	4,334	3,415	2,728	1,684	56.4



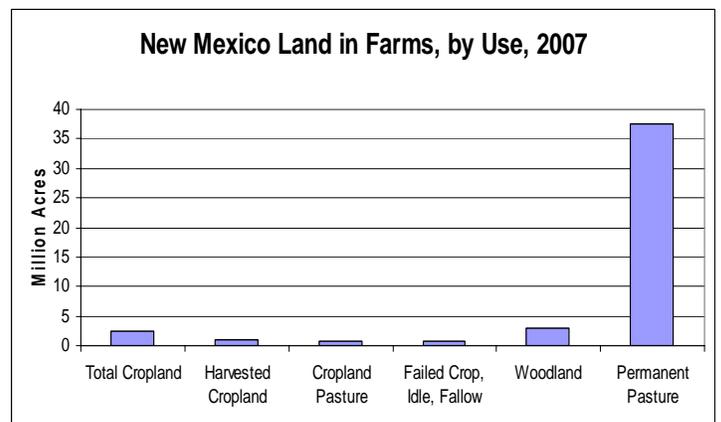
Another operator demographic is the number of year on the current operation. The chart above shows that 76 percent of operators have been on the current operation for 10 or more years.

**Land in Farms:** There were 42.24 million acres of land in farms and ranches in New Mexico in 2007, a decrease of 3.5 percent from 2002. Land-in-farm is equal to land owned, plus land rented, minus land rented to others. Land utilized for grazing on a fee per head basis should be excluded. Most public land (BLM, Forest Service, and State) is utilized

on a fee per head basis. Public land is an integral part of some ranch operations, particularly where the land ownership is a patchwork of private land and public land. The public land was not always excluded from the land-in-farm for some of these operations and impacts the land totals when comparing values between censuses.



The majority of land in farms is utilized for livestock production and is native or permanent pasture. The chart below presents the land use for New Mexico.



There were 1.01 million acres of cropland harvested in 2007, compared to 0.86 million in 2002. This is a reflection of the climate conditions and the higher failed crop area in 2002. The following chart looks at cropland, the area harvested, and the area irrigated over the last 30 year.

